

What is claimed is:

1. A magnetoresistive head comprising a magnetoresistive layer which converts magnetic signals to electric signals, a pair of electrodes for allowing an electrically sensing current to flow across said magnetoresistive layer, upper and under gap layers placed over and beneath said pair of electrodes and said magnetoresistive layer, and upper and under shield layers, one of which placed over said upper gap layer and the other placed beneath said under gap layer, wherein said pair of electrodes and at least either of said upper and under shield layers are electrically connected by varistor material that also interconnects said pair of electrodes.

2. A magnetoresistive head comprising a magnetoresistive layer which converts magnetic signals to electric signals, a pair of electrodes for allowing an electrically sensing current to flow across said magnetoresistive layer, upper and under gap layers placed over and beneath said pair of electrodes and said magnetoresistive layer, and upper and under shield layers, one of which placed over said upper gap layer and the other placed beneath said under gap layer, wherein at least either of said upper and under gap layers is made of varistor material.

3. A magnetoresistive head comprising a magnetoresistive layer which converts magnetic signals to electric signals, a pair of electrodes for allowing

which exhibits varistor characteristics and is multi-layered structure made up of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , Ta_2O_5 , Bi_2O_5 , MnO , NiO , CoO , $Fe-O$, TiO_2 , HfO_2 , ZrO_2 , or Nb_2O_5 films or oxide films whose main element is one of these substances in combination with films selected from among ZnO , SiC , $BaTiO$, Si , and $SrTiO$ films as the above varistor material.

8. The magnetoresistive head according to claim 2, wherein said magnetoresistive head employs a material which exhibits varistor characteristics and is multi-layered structure made up of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , Ta_2O_5 , Bi_2O_5 , MnO , NiO , CoO , $Fe-O$, TiO_2 , HfO_2 , ZrO_2 , or Nb_2O_5 films or oxide films whose main element is one of these substances in combination with films selected from among ZnO , SiC , $BaTiO$, Si , and $SrTiO$ films as the above varistor material.

9. The magnetoresistive head according to claim 3, wherein said magnetoresistive head employs a material which exhibits varistor characteristics and is multi-layered structure made up of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 , Ta_2O_5 , Bi_2O_5 , MnO , NiO , CoO , $Fe-O$, TiO_2 , HfO_2 , ZrO_2 , or Nb_2O_5 films or oxide films whose main element is one of these substances in combination with films selected from among ZnO , SiC , $BaTiO$, Si , and $SrTiO$ films as the above varistor material.

10. The magnetoresistive head according to claim 7, wherein said material is formed in a multi-layer wherein the thickness of a film made of Al_2O_3 , SiO_2 ,

Ta2O5, Bi2O5, MnO, NiO, CoO, Fe-O, TiO2, HfO2, ZrO2, or Nb2O5 or an oxide film whose main element is one of these substances is 5 nm or less.

11. The magnetoresistive head according to claim 8,
5 wherein said material is formed in a multi-layer wherein the thickness of a film made of Al2O3, SiO2, Ta2O5, Bi2O5, MnO, NiO, CoO, Fe-O, TiO2, HfO2, ZrO2, or Nb2O5 or an oxide film whose main element is one of these substances is 5 nm or less.

10 12. The magnetoresistive head according to claim 9, wherein said material is formed in a multi-layer wherein the thickness of a film made of Al2O3, SiO2, Ta2O5, Bi2O5, MnO, NiO, CoO, Fe-O, TiO2, HfO2, ZrO2, or Nb2O5 or an oxide film whose main element is one of
15 these substances is 5 nm or less.

13. A magnetic head assembly comprising the magnetoresistive head according to claim 1 in combination with an inductive thin-film head.

14. A magnetic head assembly comprising the
20 magnetoresistive head according to claim 2 in combination with an inductive thin-film head.

15. A magnetic head assembly comprising the magnetoresistive head according to claim 3 in combination with an inductive thin-film head.

25 16. A magnetic read/write device with the magnetic head assembly according to claim 13 installed thereon.

17. A magnetic read/write device with the magnetic head assembly according to claim 14 installed thereon.

18. A magnetic read/write device with the magnetic head assembly according to claim 15 installed thereon.